THE CASE OF JENNIE BRICE

By MARY ROBERTS RINEHART

CHAPTER VII.

THAT was Friday afternoon. All that evening and most of Saturday and Sunday Mr. Holcombe sat on the floor with his eye to the reflecting mirror and his notebook beside him. I have it before me.

On the first page is the "dog meat—$2" entry. On the next, the description of what occurred on Sunday night, March 4, and Monday morning, the 5th. Following that came a sketch, made with a carbon sheet of the torn paper found behind the washstand:

And then came the entries for Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Friday evening:

6:30—Eating hearty supper.

7—Lights cigarette and paces floor. Notice that when Mrs. P. knocks he goes to desk and pretends to be writing.

8—Is examining book. Looks like a railway guide.

8:30—It is a steamship guide.

8:45—Tailor's boy brings box. Gives boy 50 cents. Query: Where does he get money now that J. B. is gone?

9—Tries on new suit (brown).

9:30—Has been spending a quarter of an hour on his knees looking behind furniture and examining baseboard.

10—He has the key to the onyx clock. Has hidden it twice—once up the chimney flue, once behind baseboard.

10:15—He has just thrown key or similar small article outside window into yard.

11—Has gone to bed. Light burning. Shall sleep here on floor.

11:30—He cannot sleep. Is up walking the floor and smoking.

2 a. m.—Saturday. Disturbance below. He had nightmare and was calling "Jennie!" He got up, took a drink and is now reading.

8 a. m.—Must have slept. He is shaving.

12 m.—Nothing this morning. He wrote for four hours, sometimes reading aloud what he had written.

2 p. m.—He has a visitor, a man. Cannot hear all—word now and then. "Llewellyn is the very man." "Devil of a risk." "We'll see you through." "Lost the slip." "Didn't go to the hotel. She went to a private house." "Eliza Shaeffer."

Who went to a private house? Jennie Brice?

2:30—Cannot hear. Are whispering. The visitor has given Ladley roll of bills.

4—Followed the visitor, a tall man with a pointed beard. He went to the Liberty theater. Found it was Bronson, business manager there. Who is Llewellyn, and who is Eliza Shaeffer?

4:15—Had Mrs. P. bring telephone book; six Llewellyns in the book; no Eliza Shaeffer. Ladley appears more cheerful since Bronson's visit. He has bought all the evening papers and is searching for something. Has not found it.

7—Ate well. Have asked Mrs. P. to take my place here while I interview the six Llewellyns.

11—Mrs. P. reports a quiet evening. He read and smoked. Has gone to bed. Light burning. Saw five Llewellyns. None of them knew Bronson or Ladley. Sixth—a lawyer—out at revival meeting. Went to the church and walked home with him. He knows something. Acknowledged he knew Bronson. Had met Ladley. Did not believe Mrs. Ladley dead. Regretted I had not been to the meeting. Good sermon. Asked me for a dollar for missions.

9 a. m.—Sunday. Ladley in bad shape. Apparently been drinking all night. Cannot eat. Sent out early for papers and has searched them all. Found entry on second page, stared at it, then flung the paper away. Have sent for same paper.

10 a. m.—Paper says: "Body of woman washed ashore yesterday at Sewickley. Much mutilated by flood debris." Ladley in bed, staring at ceiling. Wonder if he sees tube? He is ghastly.

That is the last entry in the notebook for that day. Mr. Holcombe called me in great excitement shortly after 10 and showed me the item. Neither of us doubted for a moment that it was Jennie Brice who had been found. He started for Sewickley that same afternoon, and he probably communicated with the police before he left, for once or twice I saw Mr. Graves, the detective, sauntering past the house.

Mr. Ladley ate no dinner. He went out at 4, and I had Mr. Reynolds follow him. But they were both back in a half hour. Mr. Reynolds reported that Mr. Ladley had bought some headache tablets and some bromide powders to make him sleep.

Mr. Holcombe came back that evening. He thought the body was that of Jennie Brice, but the head was gone. He was much depressed and did not immediately go back to the periscope. I asked if the head had been cut off or taken off by a steamer. He was afraid the latter, as a hand was gone too.

It was about 11 o'clock that night that the doorbell rang. It was Mr. Graves, with a small man behind him. I knew the man. He lived in a shanty boat not far from my house, a curious affair with shelves full of dishes and tinware. In the spring he would be towed up the Monongahela a hundred miles or so and float down, tying up at different landings and selling his wares. Timothy Senft was his name. We called him Tim.

Mr. Graves motioned me to be quiet. Both of us knew that behind the parlor door Ladley was probably listening.

"Sorry to get you up, Mrs. Pitman," said Mr. Graves, "but this man says he has bought beer here today. That won't do, Mrs. Pitman."

"Beer! I haven't such a thing in the house. Come in and look!" I snapped. And the two of them went back to the kitchen.

"Now," said Mr. Graves when I had shut the door, "where's the dog's meat man?"

"Upstairs."

"Bring him quietly."

I called Mr. Holcombe, and he came eagerly, notebook and all. "Ah!" he said when he saw Tim. "So you've turned up!"

"Yes, sir."

"It seems, Mr. Dog's—Mr. Holcombe," said Mr. Graves, "that you are right—partly anyhow. Tim here did help a man with a boat that night"—

"Threw him a rope, sir." Tim broke in. "He'd got out in the current, and what with the ice and his not knowing much about a boat he'd have kept on to New Orleans if I hadn't caught him—or kingdom come."

"Exactly. And what time did you say this was?"

"Between 3 and 4 last Sunday night—or Monday morning. He said he

"Threw him a rope, sir," Tim broke in.

couldn't sleep and went out in a boat, meaning to keep in close to shore. But he got drawn out in the current."

"Where did you see him first?"

"By the Ninth street bridge."

"Did you hail him?"

"He saw my light and hailed me. I was making fast to a coal barge after one of my ropes had busted."

"You threw the line to him there?"

"No, sir. He tried to work in to shore. I ran along River avenue to below the Sixth street bridge. He got pretty close in there, and I threw him a rope. He was about done up."

"Would you know him again?"

"Yes, sir. He gave me $5 and said to say nothing about it. He didn't want anybody to know he had been such a fool."

They took him quietly upstairs then and let him look through the periscope. He identified Mr. Ladley absolutely.

When Tim and Mr. Graves had gone Mr. Holcombe and I were left alone in the kitchen. Mr. Holcombe leaned over and patted Peter as he lay in his basket.

"We've got him, old boy," he said. "The chain is just about complete. He'll never kick you again."

But Mr. Holcombe was wrong—not about kicking Peter, although I don't believe Mr. Ladley ever did that again, but in thinking we had him.

I washed that next morning, Monday, but all the time I was rubbing and starching and hanging out my mind was with Jennie Brice. The sight of Molly Maguire next door at the window rubbing and brushing at the fur coat only made things worse.

At noon when the Maguire youngsters came home from school I bribed Tommy, the youngest, into the kitchen with the promise of a doughnut.

"I see your mother has a new fur coat," I said, with the plate of doughnuts just beyond his reach.

"Yes'm."

"She didn't buy it?"

"She didn't buy it. Say, Mrs. Pitman, gimme that doughnut."

"Oh, so the coat washed in!"

"No'm. Pap found it down by the point on a cake of ice. He thought it was a dog, and rowed out for it."

Well, I hadn't wanted the coat, as far as that goes; I'd managed well enough without furs for twenty years or more. But it was a satisfaction to know that it had not floated into Mrs. Maguire's kitchen and spread itself at her feet, as one may say. However, that was not the question after all. The real issue was that if it was Jennie Brice's coat and was found across the river on a cake of ice, then one of two things was certain: Either Jennie Brice's body wrapped in the coat had been thrown into the water out in the current, or she herself, hoping to incriminate her husband, had flung her coat into the river.

I told Mr. Holcombe, and he interviewed Joe Maguire that afternoon. The upshot of it was that Tommy had been correctly informed. Joe had witnesses who had lined up to see him rescue a dog, and had beheld his return in triumph with a wet and soggy fur coat. At 3 o'clock Mrs. Maguire, instructed by Mr. Graves, brought the coat to me for identification, turning it about for my inspection, but refusing to take her hands off it.

"If her husband says to me that he wants it back, well and good," she said, "but I don't give it up to nobody but him. Some folks I know of would be glad enough to have it."

I was certain it was Jennie Brice's coat, but the maker's name had been ripped out. With Molly holding one arm and I the other we took it to Mr. Ladley's door and knocked. He opened it, grumbling.

"I have asked you not to interrupt me," he said, with his pen in his hand. His eyes fell on the coat. "What's that?" he asked, changing color.

"I think it's Mrs. Ladley's fur coat," I said.

He stood there looking at it and thinking. Then: "It can't be hers," he said. "She wore hers when she went away."

"Perhaps she dropped it in the water."

He looked at me and smiled. "And why would she do that?" he asked mockingly. "Was it out of fashion?"

"That's Mrs. Ladley's coat," I persisted, but Molly Maguire jerked it from me and started away. He stood there looking at me and smiling in his nasty way.

"This excitement is telling on you, Mrs. Pitman," he said coolly. "You're too emotional for detective work." Then he went in and shut the door.

When I went downstairs Molly Maguire was waiting in the kitchen and had the audacity to ask me if I thought the coat needed a new lining!

It was on Monday evening that the strangest event in years happened to me. I went to my sister's house! And the fact that I was admitted at a side entrance made it even stranger. It happened this way:

Supper was over, and I was cleaning up, when an automobile came to the door. It was Alma's car. The chauffeur gave me a note:

Dear Mrs. Pitman—I am not at all well and very anxious. Will you come to see me at once? My mother is out to dinner, and I am alone. The car will bring you. Cordially, LIDA HARVEY.

I put on my best dress at once and got into the limousine. Half the neighborhood was out watching. I leaned back in the upholstered seat, fairly quivering with excitement. This was Alma's car; that was Alma's card case; the little clock had her monogram on it. Even the flowers in the flower holder, yellow tulips, reminded me of Alma, a trifle showy, but good to look at. And I was going to her house.

I was not taken to the main entrance, but to a side door. The queer dreamlike feeling was still there. In this back hall, relegated from the more conspicuous part of the house, there were even pieces of furniture from the old home, and my father's picture in an oval gilt frame hung over my head. I had not seen a picture of him for twenty years. I went over and touched it gently.

"Father, father!" I said.

Under it was the tall hall chair that I had climbed over as a child and had stood on many times to see myself in the mirror above. The chair was newly finished and looked the better for its age. I glanced in the old glass. The chair had stood time better than I. I was a middle aged woman, lined with poverty and care, shabby, prematurely gray, a little hard. I had thought my father an old man when that picture was taken, and now I was even older. "Father!" I whispered again and fell to crying in the dimly lighted hall.

Lida sent for me at once. I had only time to dry my eyes and straighten my hat. Had I met Alma on the stairs I would have passed her without a word. She would not have known me. But I saw no one.

Lida was in bed. She was lying there with a rose shaded lamp beside her and a great bowl of spring flowers on a little stand at her elbow. She sat up when I went in and had a maid place a chair for me beside the bed. She looked very childish with her hair in a braid on the pillow, and her slim young arms and throat bare.

"I'm so glad you came!" she said, and would not be satisfied until the light was just right for my eyes and my coat unfastened and thrown open.

"I'm not really ill," she informed me. "I'm—I'm just tired and nervous, and—and unhappy, Mrs. Pitman."

"I am sorry," I said. I wanted to lean over and pat her hand, to draw the covers around her and mother her a little—I had had no one to mother for so long—but I could not. She would have thought it queer and presumptuous—or no, not that. She was too sweet to have thought that.

"Mrs. Pitman," she said suddenly, "who was this Jennie Brice?"

"She was an actress. She and her husband lived at my house."

"Was she—was she beautiful?"

"Well," I said slowly, "I never thought of that. She was handsome, in a large way."

"Was she young?"

"Yes. Twenty-eight or so."

"That isn't very young," she said, looking relieved. "But I don't think men like very young women. Do you?"

"I know one who does," I said, smiling. But she sat up in bed suddenly and looked at me with her clear, childish eyes.

"I don't want him to like me," she flashed. "I—I want him to hate me."

"Tut, tut! You want nothing of the sort."

"Mrs. Pitman," she said, "I sent for you because I'm nearly crazy. Mr. Howell was a friend of that woman. He has acted like a maniac since she disappeared. He doesn't come to see me, he has given up his work on the paper, and I saw him today on the street—he looks like a ghost."

That put me to thinking.

"He might have been a friend," I admitted, "although as far as I know he was never at the house but once, and then he saw both of them."

"When was that?"

"Sunday morning, the day before she disappeared. They were arguing something."

CHAPTER VIII.

SHE looked at me attentively. "You know more than you are telling me, Mrs. Pitman," she said. "You—do you think Jennie Brice is dead and that Mr. Howell knows—who did it?"

"I think she is dead, and I think possibly Mr. Howell suspects who did it. He does not know, or he would have told the police."

"You do not think he was—was in love with Jennie Brice, do you?"

"I'm certain of that," I said. "He is very much in love with a foolish girl, who ought to have more faith in him than she has."

She colored a little and smiled at that, but the next moment she was sitting forward, tense and questioning again.

"If that is true, Mrs. Pitman," she said, "who was the veiled woman he met that Monday morning at daylight and took across the bridge to Pittsburgh? I believe it was Jennie Brice. If it was not, who was it?"

"I don't believe he took any woman across the bridge at that hour. Who says he did?"

"Uncle Jim saw him. He had been playing cards all night at one of the clubs and was walking home. He says he met Mr. Howell face to face and spoke to him. The woman was tall and veiled. Uncle Jim sent for him a day or two later, and he refused to explain. Then they forbade him the house. Mamma objected to him anyhow, and he only came on sufferance. He is a college man of good family, but without any money at all save what he earns. And now"—

I had had some young newspaper men with me, and I knew what they got. They were nice boys, but they made $15 a week. I'm afraid I smiled a little as I looked around the room, with its gray grass cloth walls, its toilet table spread with ivory and gold and the maid in attendance in her black dress and white apron, collar and cuffs. Even the little nightgown Lida was wearing would have taken a week's salary or more. She saw my smile.

"It was to be his chance," she said. "If he made good he was to have something better. My Uncle Jim owns the paper, and he promised me to help him. But"—

So Jim was running a newspaper! That was a curious career for Jim to choose—Jim, who was twice expelled from school and who could never write a letter without a dictionary beside him! I had a pang when I heard his name again after all the years, for I had written to Jim from Oklahoma after Mr. Pitman died asking for money to bury him and had never even had a reply.

"And you haven't seen him since?"

"Once. I—didn't hear from him, and I called him up. We—we met in the park. He said everything was all right, but he couldn't tell me just then. The next day he resigned from the paper and went away. Mrs. Pitman, it's driving me crazy, for they have found a body, and they think it is hers. If it is and he was with her"—

"Don't be a foolish girl," I protested. "If he was with Jennie Brice she is still living, and if he was not with Jennie Brice"—

"If it was not Jennie Brice then I have a right to know who it was," she declared. "He was not like himself when I met him. He said such queer things—he talked about an onyx clock and said he had been made a fool of and that no matter what came out I was always to remember that he had done what he did for the best and that—that he cared for me more than for anything in this world or the next."

"That wasn't so foolish!" I couldn't help it. I leaned over and drew her nightgown up over her bare white shoulder. "You won't help anything or anybody by taking cold, my dear," I said. "Call your maid and have her put a dressing gown around you."

I left soon after. There was little I could do. But I comforted her as best I could and said good night. My heart was heavy as I went downstairs. Fortwist things as I might, it was clear that in some way the Howell boy was mixed up in the Brice case. Poor little troubled Lida! Poor distracted boy!

I had a curious experience downstairs. I had reached the foot of the staircase and was turning to go back and along the hall to the side entrance when I came face to face with Isaac, the old colored man who had driven the family carriage when I was a child and whom I had seen at intervals since I came back pottering around Alma's house. The old man was bent and feeble. He came slowly down the hall with a bunch of keys in his hand. I had seen him do the same thing many times.

He stopped when he saw me, and I shrank back from the light, but he had seen me. "Miss Bess!" he said. "Foh Gawd's sake, Miss Bess!"

"You are making a mistake, my friend," I said, quivering; "I am not Miss Bess!"

He came close to me and stared into my face. And from that he looked at my cloth gloves, at my coat, and he shook his white head. "I sure thought you was Miss Bess," he said and made no further effort to detain me. He led the way back to the door, where the machine waited, his head shaking with the palsy of age, muttering as he went. He opened the door with his best manner and stood aside.

"Good night, ma'am," he quavered.

I had tears in my eyes. I tried to keep them back. "Good night," I said. "Good night, Ikkie."

It had slipped out, my baby name for old Isaac!

"Miss Bess!" he cried. "Oh, praise Gawd, it's Miss Bess again!"

He caught my arm and pulled me back into the hall, and there he held me, crying over me, muttering praises for my return, begging me to come back, recalling little tender things out of the past that almost killed me to hear again.

But I had made my bed and must lie in it. I forced him to swear silence about my visit; I made him promise not to reveal my identity to Lida; and I told him—heaven forgive me—that I was well and prosperous and happy.

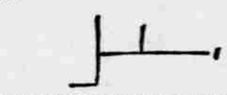
Dear old Isaac! I would not let him come to see me, but the next day there came a basket with six bottles of wine and an old daguerreotype of my mother that had been his treasure. Nor was that basket the last.

The coroner held an inquest over the headless body the next day, Tuesday. Mr. Graves telephoned me in the morning and I went to the morgue with him.

I do not like the morgue, although some of my neighbors pay it weekly visits. It is by way of excursion, like nickelodeons or watching the circus put up its tents. I have heard them threaten the children that if they misbehaved they would not be taken to the morgue that week!

I failed to identify the body. How could I? It had been a tall woman, probably five feet eight, and I thought the nails looked like those of Jennie Brice. The thumb nail of one was broken short off. I told Mr. Graves about her speaking of a broken nail, but he shrugged his shoulders and said nothing.

There was a curious scar over the heart and he was making a sketch of it. It reached from the center of the chest for about six inches across the left breast, a narrow thin line that one could hardly see. It was shaped like this:



I felt sure that Jennie Brice had had no such scar, and Mr. Graves thought as I did. Temple Hope, called to the inquest, said she had never heard of one, and Mr. Ladley himself, at the inquest, swore that his wife had had nothing of the sort. I was watching him, and I did not think he was lying. And yet the hand was very like Jennie Brice's. It was all bewildering.

Mr. Ladley's testimony at the inquest was disappointing. He was cool and collected; said he had no reason to believe that his wife was dead and less reason to think she had been drowned; she had left him in a rage, and if she found out that by hiding she was putting him in an unpleasant position she would probably hide indefinitely.

To the disappointment of everybody, the identity of the woman remained a mystery. No one with such a scar was missing. A small woman of my own age, a Mrs. Murray, whose daughter, a stenographer, had disappeared, attended the inquest. But her daughter had had no such scar and had worn her nails short because of using the typewriter. Alice Murray was the missing girl's name. Her mother sat beside me and cried most of the time.

One thing was brought out at the inquest—the body had been thrown into the river after death. There was no water in the lungs. The verdict was "death by the hands of some person or persons unknown."

Mr. Holcombe was not satisfied. In some way or other he had got permission to attend the autopsy and had brought away a tracing of the scar. All the way home in the street car he stared at the drawing, holding first one eye shut and then the other. But, like the coroner, he got nowhere. He folded the paper and put it in his notebook.

"None the less, Mrs. Pitman," he said, "that is the body of Jennie Brice. Her husband killed her, probably by strangling her. He took the body out in the boat and dropped it into the swollen river above the Ninth street bridge."

"Why do you think he strangled her?"

"There was no mark on the body and no poison was found."

"Then, if he strangled her, where did the blood come from?"

"I didn't limit myself to strangulation," he said irritably. "He may have cut her throat."

"Or brained her with my onyx clock," I added with a sigh. For I missed the clock more and more.

He went down in his pockets and brought up a key. "I'd forgotten this," he said. "It shows you were right—that the clock was there when the Ladleys took the room. I found this in the yard this morning."

It was when I got home from the inquest that I found old Isaac's basket waiting. I am not a crying woman, but I could hardly see my mother's picture for tears. Well, after all, that is not the Brice story. I am not writing the sordid tragedy of my life.

That was on Tuesday. Jennie Brice had been missing nine days. In all that time, although she was cast for the piece at the theater that week, no one there had heard from her. Her relatives had had no word. She had gone away, if she had gone, on a cold March night, in a striped black and white dress with a red collar and a red and black hat, without her fur coat, which she had worn all winter. She had gone very early in the morning or during the night. How had she gone? Mr. Ladley said he had rowed her to Federal street at half after 6 and had brought the boat back. After they had quarreled violently all night, and when she was leaving him, wouldn't he have allowed her to take herself away? Besides, the police had found no trace of her on an early train. And then at daylight, between 5 and 6, my own brother had seen a woman with Mr. Howell, a woman who might have been Jennie Brice. But if it was, why did not Mr. Howell say so?

Mr. Ladley claimed she was hiding in revenge. But Jennie Brice was not that sort of woman. There was something big about her, something that is found often in large women—a lack of spite. She was not petty or malicious. Her faults, like her virtues, were for all to see.

In spite of the failure to identify the body Mr. Ladley was arrested that night, Tuesday, and this time it was for murder. I know now that the police were taking long chances. They had no strong motive for the crime. As Mr. Holcombe said, they had provocation, but not motive, which is different. They had opportunity, and they had a lot of straggling links of clews, which in the total made a fair chain of circumstantial evidence. But that was all.

That is the way the case stood on Tuesday night, March 13.

Mr. Ladley was taken away at 9 o'clock. He was perfectly cool, asked me to help him pack a suit case and whistled while it was being done. He requested to be allowed to walk to the jail and went quietly, with a detective on one side and, I think, a sheriff's officer on the other.

Just before he left he asked for a word or two with me, and when he paid his bill up to date and gave me an extra dollar for taking care of Peter I was almost overcome. He took the manuscript of his play with him, and I remember his asking if he could have any typing done in the jail. I had never seen a man arrested for murder before, but I think he was probably the coolest suspect the officers had ever seen. They hardly knew what to make of it.

Mr. Reynolds and I had a cup of tea after all the excitement and were sitting at the dining room table drinking it when the bell rang. It was Mr. Howell. He half staggered into the hall when I opened the door and was for going into the parlor bedroom without a word.

"Mr. Ladley's gone, if you want him," I said. I thought his face cleared.

"Gone!" he said. "Where?"

"To jail."

He did not reply at once. He stood there, tapping the palm of one hand with the forefinger of the other. He was dirty and unshaven. His clothes looked as if he had been sleeping in them.

"So they've got him!" he muttered finally, and turning, was about to go out the front door without another word, but I caught his arm.

"You're sick, Mr. Howell," I said. "You'd better not go out just yet."

"Oh, I'm all right." He shook his handkerchief out and wiped his face. I saw that his hands were shaking.

"Come back and have a cup of tea and a slice of homemade bread."

He hesitated and looked at his watch. "I'll do it, Mrs. Pitman," he said. "I suppose I'd better throw a little fuel into this engine of mine. It's been going hard for several days."

He ate like a wolf. I cut half a loaf into slices for him, and he drank the rest of the tea. Mr. Reynolds creaked up to bed and left him still eating, and me still cutting and spreading. Now that I had a chance to see him I was shocked. The rims of his eyes were red, his collar black and his hair hung over his forehead. But when he finally sat back and looked at me his color was better.

"So they've canned him!" he said.

"Time enough, too," said I.

He leaned forward and put both his elbows on the table. "Mrs. Pitman," he said earnestly, "I don't like him any more than you do. But he never killed that woman."

"Somebody killed her."

"How do you know? How do you know she's dead?"

Well, I didn't, of course—I only felt it.

"The police haven't even proved a crime. They can't hold a man for a suppositious murder."

"Perhaps they can't, but they're doing it," I retorted. "If the woman's alive she won't let him hang."

"I'm not so sure of that," he said heavily and got up. He looked in the little mirror over the sideboard and brushed back his hair. "I look bad enough," he said, "but I feel worse. Well, you've saved my life, Mrs. Pitman. Thank you."

"How is my—how is Miss Harvey?" I asked, as we started out. He turned and smiled at me in his boyish way.

"The best ever!" he said. "I haven't seen her for days, and it seems like centuries. She—she is the only girl in the world for me, Mrs. Pitman, although I"— He stopped and drew a long breath. "She is beautiful, isn't she?"

"Very beautiful," I answered. "Her mother was always"—

"Her mother!" He looked at me curiously.

"I knew her mother years ago," I said, putting the best face on my mistake that I could.

"Then I'll remember you to her, if she ever allows me to see her again. Just now I'm persona non grata."

"If you'll do the kindly thing, Mr. Howell," I said, "you'll forget me to her."

He looked into my eyes and then thrust out his hand.

"All right," he said. "I'll not ask any questions. I guess there are some curious stories hidden in these old houses."

Peter hobbled to the front door with him. He had not gone so far as the parlor once while Mr. Ladley was in the house.

They had had a sale of spring flowers at the store that day, and Mr. Reynolds had brought me a pot of white tulips. That night I hung my mother's picture over the mantel in the dining room and put the tulips beneath it. It gave me a feeling of comfort; I had never seen my mother's grave or put flowers on it.

(To be Continued Next Wednesday.)

All the news all the time—The Argus.